The Theosophical FORUM

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TO OUR READERS.

There are many among our readers who feel an impulse to write something, either as a comment on something in THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM, or following up some new line of thought. Very often, and very wrongly, they resist this impulse, through lack of self-confidence, or, perhaps, mere laziness.

We invite these future writers to begin at once. We shall be very glad to receive and consider anything they may send us. If THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM is to be read, it must first be written; and we should keep in mind that, in our Movement, we learn by teaching, and teach by learning.

THE EDITOR,
Flushing, N. Y.

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THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

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THE LIFE THAT KILLS.

"Death and disintegration are not a mere breaking "down, a going to pieces, but a specific process, that "is checked by the life process."

From a conversation with Dr. Loeb.

In the work of Theosophical writers, especially in the technical literature, we meet with the assertion that "it is life, not death, that kills," the statement not always being coupled with an explanation.

Let us consider the relation existing between the various aspects of the real man. Man's highest principle partakes of the nature of intensely active matter on the plane of spirituality; the Divine Ego. In contrast to this, at the other end of the diameter of the human sphere, stands the lowest principle; this is most inert Spirit (matter) *i. e.*, the physical body. Between the two and joining the three into one is the psychic body, the vehicle of the consciousness of the average person. It is like the fulcrum of a balance round which the personality swings, now gravitating towards the physical, now towards the spiritual, most of the "weight" being at the material end of the balance. Between the Ego and the material body a stream of vibrations flows or plays more or less intermittently according to man's state of waking, dreaming or dreamless sleep. In the waking state sensations or experience are

transmitted to the Divine Man through the medium of the psychic body which, at the same time, is influenced by these sensations in a degree depending upon the condition of the consciousness or "I am I," which functions in the psychic body. In the dreaming state the psychic self senses phenomena which exist on the psychic plane. In the state of dreamless sleep the condition of the waking state is reversed, the current is now flowing from the Higher Self towards the physical through the psychic plane, supplying vitality that the body expends during the waking state and remodeling and influencing the psychic body in so far as it is susceptible to the higher influence.

Now in order that the psychic body may perform these important functions properly, in order that it may transmit the life forces from the soul plane to the physical, it is necessary that it should be of an exceedingly refined, tenuous and elastic texture. These conditions obtain in childhood and youth, but as the man grows older he habitually thinks and acts in certain ways peculiar to his personality and acquires decidedly fixed ideas on many subjects on which he feels compelled to have an opinion.

This tendency towards sharply defining and limiting the sphere of consciousness of the personality has its corresponding effect upon the psychic body; as the man grows older it tends to assume more definite characteristics. It loses gradually its sensitiveness to all forms of sensation; becoming at the same time able to transmit the influences of the Higher Self through a constantly narrowing channel. Finally total unresponsiveness results and the psychic personality has crystallized into an intractable, unelastic form; it can no longer vibrate in harmony with the Ego whose life wave beats against and not through it. Under these conditions death is near at hand. The psychic body cannot persevere under the influence of the vibrations of the life forces; it is broken or shattered and the lower personality is dissolved.

While not the cause of death, this life force is the "life that kills."

This may seem a broad statement, but in the light of some of the demonstrations of modern science, it will be found to be susceptible of at least, logical proof.

No law of Nature ever acts alone and independently of all other laws; all are mutually interdependent to such a degree that if one fails in action all Nature falls into chaos. Imagine what would follow even a momentary suspension of the law of gravity, or of any of the laws regulating chemical affinity, the diffusion of gases, or the proper order of the vibrations constituting the solar spectrum! We should have at once an illustration, and in an universally disastrous manner, of the automatic action of the equally universal law of cause and effect.

As a matter of fact, it is upon the automatic action of this law that all the physical sciences, as mechanics, hydraulics, etc., are based, and it is in his ability to intelligently control, divert and utilize this law of cause and effect that man proves his inherent right of mastery over Nature—in other words, his Divinity.

In his "self-induced and self-devised efforts" at material and intellectual progress, man always finds himself as subject to Nature's laws as are the least evolved of Nature's creatures, and in his search for the causes of the effects which he observes, he is confronted by no law more important or more far-reaching than that of heredity, and in none will he find to be more important the injunction to "help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. And she will open wide before thee the portals of her secret chambers, lay bare before thy gaze the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom."

The more deeply we investigate the subject of heredity, the more we shall find that like all other laws of Nature, it cannot act alone, but is dependent upon the harmonious action of all other natural laws. It might be assumed on first thought, that the persistence of vicious or perverted tendencies and of abnormal physical structure might serve to disprove this statement; but if we will stop to inquire just what heredity means and what are the purposes and limitations of the forces which determine its action,

we shall see that there is no stronger proof of its truth than that furnished by the existence of these deviations and their hereditary transmission.

Heredity has been defined as "that biological law which is essential to the preservation of species, whereby individuals transmit to their descendants all the physical, physiological, racial, instinctual and intellectual traits which are characteristic of the species to which they belong." It will be at once seen that the transmission of any hereditary trait or characteristic is thus limited to the species or family in which it took its origin, and, as Nature never proceeds by jumps, but always in a perfectly uniform and harmonious progression, we are forced to the conclusion that the manifestations of heredity in man, taken as the culmination of evolution, must represent the sum total of all the heredities of all the kingdoms of Nature below him. Thus, while it is true that the mineral elements which are so essential to the structure and physiological welfare of man, as iron, phosphorus, sulphur, sodium, etc., are in no way different from the same substances wherever found, it is equally true that, upon their proper combination with other elements and compounds of elements found in the vegetable kingdom, man is capable of functioning as a physical and intelligent being.

While it is true that the causes back of structure are among the hidden mysteries of Nature, we are justified in believing that in no case can these causes transcend the particular kingdom and even species to which they give rise, and at no point is it possible to say "here has branched off a new species." The transmission by heredity of traits and even of physical structure acquired in an attempt at "adaptation to environment" is a well known scientific fact, but if any new species has ever arisen in this manner, it has been by a process so gradual and of such duration as to constitute in itself an evolutionary cycle. And right here enters the question of Consciousness and its manifestation in the different kingdoms of nature.

Without going into the question of what Consciousness is, except in so far as it is a characteristic of matter that is the cause or bearer of heredity, it may be defined as that "state of being aware of some object, influence, action or agency." Such a con-

ception of Consciousness will do very well as a starting point, for, if evolution begins with a specialization of the Homogeneous, each conditioned form or substance so specialized must carry with it a distinct sense of special function as well as of form, and thus we are able to recognize this sense among the elements and in the mineral kingdom as "the state of being aware of the influence, action or agency" of cohesion, chemical affinity, magnetic attraction, etc.

To say that these "forces of nature" are outside substance and not inherent in special forms of substance, is not true, for in that case, all things would be under their influence or agency and none could escape from them, as in the case of that force of Nature which we know as the law of gravitation. All things belonging to the earth are held within the earth's sphere by the action of this law, but all things are not subject to magnetic influence, while cohesion and chemical affinity are limited and modified in their action by peculiarities of molecular and atomic structure. If we accept the specialization of the undifferentiated or homogeneous of modern evolutionary philosophy as the beginning of evolution—which, by the way, is the distinct Theosophical teaching—we must assume the existence in the undifferentiated or homogeneous of all future possibilities of development, "the ultimate homogeneous units" of Spencer.

This conception of the ultimate homogeneous units brings us back to the Third Fundamental Proposition of the *Secret Doctrine,* which will well bear re-quoting in this connection.

"The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul.....and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul through the Cycle of Incarnation or Necessity, in accordance with Cyclic or Karmic Law."

The existence of any quality in the thing evolved which did not have prior existence in the source of its evolution is manifestly impossible and, on the other hand, it is an equal impossibility that the qualities inherent in and arising from the Homogeneous, should not be ultimately acquired and possessed by the Differentiated. The Absolute and Unconditioned, therefore, must be not only All-Consciousness, but all forms of Consciousness and the first differentiation must carry with it its own ratio of this quality as well

as the last. It would probably be more nearly correct to say that each manifestation of the Absolute *is* this quality and that its physical appearance is only the objective aspect of the purely subjective Consciousness.

Each specialization therefore, even the simplest and most elementary, must of necessity, be endowed with its own "spark" of the Universal Consciousness and manifests it as the so-called forces of Nature, but which again, according to Spencer, "must not be taken as realities, but as our symbols of the reality. They are the forms under which the workings of the Unknowable are cognizable to us—modes of the Unconditioned as presented under the conditions of our consciousness."

This "Spark of the Divine" is the consciousness which pervades, or rather ensouls all things and is often referred to in speculative science as "the soul of things," or according to German philosophy, "the thing in itself."

It is the Universal Sixth Principle—Over-Soul of the *Secret Doctrine,* which must pass "through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and must acquire individuality," and it is through its union with its lower or reverse aspect on each plane that makes it objective on that plane. It has been claimed within the last few months—and probably correctly—that, under certain electrical conditions, matter can be and is reduced to its "primary state" and thus ceases to be objective as matter; but it must be noted that its return to the objective condition is always on the same plane from which it started—that is, platinum or aluminum would always re-come platinum or aluminum and nothing else.

It is this union of the subjective or noumenal and the objective or phenomenal—soul and body, positive and negative—that gives duality to all Nature, and through which consciousness manifests itself in the first differentiation as the first of the seven macrocosmic and microcosmic principles, *i. e.,* form, body, or structure —the Sthula Sharira of the Hindus.

It would be difficult to trace heredity here except as it would appear in the direct and automatic relations of cause to effect for, although in one sense there are gradations even among the elements, relating to atomic weights, combining power, etc., there is

still no evidence that the elements or the minerals have increased either in number or in quantity since their first appearance. It is a fact, however, that they always maintain their chemical identity, no matter in what inorganic or organic combinations they may occur.

Each evolution is limited to its own cycle of consciousness and, as the manifestation of consciousness enlarges, it extends to higher types and new orders of life or existence appear. "In the mineral atom it is connected with the lowest principle of the Spirits of the Earth—the Six-fold Dhyanis—; in the vegetable particle, with their second—Prana (Life); in the animal, with all these plus the third and fourth; in man, the germ must receive the fruitage of all the five." *S. D.* Vol 1., pp. 244-5.

There can, therefore, be no transferance of consciousness from one kingdom of nature to another until each cycle in which consciousness is manifesting is complete. That is, each "spark" or "ray" of consciousness must have acquired "the absolute perfection" of its own cycle of existence before it can pass on to a "higher standard of excellence in the following period of activity—just as a perfect flower must cease to be a perfect flower and die, in order to grow into a perfect fruit." *S. D.* Vol. 1, p. 74.

As in the greater cosmical evolution of the differentiated from the homogeneous—the gradual expansion of consciousness—there is the necessary return to the homogeneous, so there is the same rhythmic or cyclic action "in all the minor changes throughout the Universe." (Spencer, First Principles.) And as each cycle, no matter how small and apparently unimportant, must be complete in itself, and as each period of activity must be followed by a corresponding period of rest, it would follow that in the transference of consciousness from one kingdom of nature to another, or even from special types or species within any kingdom, such a change must be preceded by a return of the evolved or specialized to its primary state, the homogenous. Thus iron is always iron and can never directly become anything else, just as sheep consciousness always manifests as sheep and never as goat, horse or man.

Each species is thus limited to its own cycle of existence and, in accordance with the Theosophical teaching in regard to cycles, it would seem more probable that an Ego, manifesting in one species,

having achieved the perfection of that species, returns to its source to again issue forth carrying with it the accumulation of past experiences to a new and larger existence, rather than that an Ego or ray of consciousness abandons its physical form in order to accommodate other Egos passing up from lower planes. This is borne out by the well known disappearance of types and species where the action of the law of the survival of the fittest can not apply and where, without some such hypothesis as the completeness of all cycles, whether small or great, we should be forced to the other alternative—an enormous waste of energy.

Viewed from this standpoint, there would seem to be complete harmony between the three accounts of creation most generally accepted by the world to-day—the Biblical, the Puranic and the modern evolutionary.

Science recognizes the evolution of the Universe as a harmonious progression from the Unmanifested, on through increasing degrees of manifestation back again to the Unmanifestated, in endless succession, but so far, has refused to accept the necessity for the same rhythmic change, equally perpetual, in the minor evolutions or cycles of evolution, and which is equally essential in the atom as in the cosmic. As such harmonious progression the "days" or periods of Creation of Genesis are seen to be identical with the Creations of the Puranas, each "day" or period bringing forth a further unfoldment in proper evolutionary ratio.

In tracing a line of heredity in the continuity of life or consciousness through the successive evolutionary cycles, it may be well to recapitulate: The first physical stage of differentiation from the Homogeneous—although Esoteric Science recognizes one preceding this—is the nebular or "fire-mist period, the first stage of cosmic life after its chaotic state, when atoms issue from Laya." The next stage would be that wherein consciousness crystallizes into concrete form under the influence of the dual manifestation of itself, known as attraction and repulsion which, as previously quoted, "must not be taken as realities, but as our symbols of the reality."

The first "ultimate unit" of consciousness, having passed through, and gained the full experience and acquired the "absolute perfection" of its cycle, passes on to a "higher standard of excel-

lence" in the next period of activity, in union with the next ultimate unit—Prana, or organic life—in the vegetable organism. In this stage of evolution we have then consciousness capable of manifesting as form *plus* vitality and of transmitting through the medium of a "germ," by which this form and vitality are perpetuated, inherited traits and characteristics. This vegetable cycle completed, its evolution having been perfected, its Nirvana earned and enjoyed, the now enlarged consciousness re-emerges from its period of Nirvanic or subjective obscuration, united to the third and this again to the fourth ultimate unit—each expansion of consciousness bearing with it inherited traits acquired in previous states of specialization. Each inheritance thus belongs not only to its own cycle of evolution, but to the cycles of all the forms through which it has passed, each in turn the microcosm of its macrocosm.

Consciousness has now evolved to the plane of the animal kingdom, and here we find the first distinct evidence of a conscious and a sub-conscious sense of individuality—the first being the endowment of the animal soul—Kama—the second being astral and subjective. These qualities, or rather the peculiar character in structure of the organs through which these qualities are manifested, as well as the peculiarities of physical form, are transmitted as a direct inheritance from one individual to its successor by means of a germ which is not distinguishable from that which serves to perpetuate the characteristics of vegetable life.

The consummation of evolution in the animal kingdom is reached, as before stated, in man—that is, the purely animal man. Having reached "absolute perfection" on the strictly animal plane, man is now ready to have breathed into him the "Breath of Life," Manas, and he becomes a Living Soul. This is the last "creation" and in this creation is embodied the sum total of all the heredities of a gradually enlarging Consciousness of individuality through all the cycles—elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal—which preceded him. "Thus in man alone having received the fruitage of all the five" principles or creations, the "Jiva"—the aggregate of all the ultimate units of consciousness—"is complete." "As to his seventh principle, it is but one of the Beams of the Universal Sun, for each rational creature receives the temporary loan only of that which has to return to its source."

MYSTERIES.

When a man accomplishes the task of bringing back to life his inherent capacity of seeing through and behind the symbols of any Mysteries, whether they be of Eleusis, or life, or Nature; when this dead centre of his mind's activities is once more ablaze with living fire, his time would come to be hierophant to us all. He will be entitled to give us object-lessons kindred to the Eleusinian Mysteries, and, by gradual and indirect suggestion, to lead our thought away from things gross and temporary, restoring it to its natural elements of direct perception and life amongst things immaterial and infinite.

This may seem a very high-sounding utterance, devoid of any practical and rational meaning. I must try to make my words clearer by the following illustration.

As I have said before, modern students cannot possibly make sure of either the subjects or the methods of the ancient Mysteries. But of one hint we may be sure, however, as all the learned heads of Europe seem to agree as to its authenticity. The symbolical mystery-dramas enacted by the priests at the Mysteries of Eleusis, with all their many-colored pomp of light and sound, invariably ended by a plain ear of corn being shown to the spectators, in perfect silence and with all simplicity, which, nevertheless, was considered as "the greatest, the most marvellous, and the most perfect act of the Mysteries." Once more, I have no "direct, rational and logical" data for the following statement, but my sense of things "indirect, figurative and symbolical," prompts me to suggest this was a way the hierophants had to remind their initiates of the many lives for every human soul.

How did I come to receive this impression? The answer is: By gradual and indirect suggestion, the image of more gross and temporary things being gradually supplanted by other images and words more refined and spiritual.

This is how I trace the gradual change:

(1) An ear of corn, a thing of straw, a little starch and a little water.

(2) Pictures I saw of ears of corn represented on very ancient funereal monuments and urns of Greece.

(3) An article on ancient Egypt in which, amongst other things,

I read that in that country a dead man often was represented as a solitary grain falling into the earth from a complete ear of corn.

(4) The great words sacred and dear to any person brought up in a Christian country: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

(5) Similar symbols of the Vedantins, the thread-Self, the golden string going through the hearts of many pearls to form one complete jewel.

(6) The Self, the soul of the soul, remaining one and the same through all births of all humanity.

(7) Many lives for every human soul.

The Mysteries of Eleusis must have been only a sort of glorified and magnified elder brother to the thinking process by which I have thus reached things immaterial and eternal, having started from things gross and temporary.

Now comes the turn of the third question my thinking apparatus was worried with: Who is to restore Mysteries?

The great Teachers who work through the Theosophical Movement seem to suggest: the members of this movement. But I make so bold as to say that their efforts would prove of no avail whatever unless they received active, though sometimes unconscious, help from the huge crowd of ordinary men and women, who are so much more in the dark than they, yet with whom the bulk of resistance and effort must necessarily lie.

Yet without being too great an optimist, I take it upon myself to affirm that this active help *is* given to the Theosophical Movement by all sincere people without distinction of sex, race or creed, who long for something more stable, more true, and more real than the trumpery life we lead on this earth of ours. And whether these men and women belong to the Theosophical Society or not, whether they love it or hate it, even whether they know that there is such a thing in this world or not, is of no real importance. They are sure to help the restoration of ancient Mysteries, though, in most cases, unconsciously and indirectly, sometimes involuntarily, so long as there thrills a responsive echo in their hearts to the following words of the great initiate Plutarch:

"To die is to be initiated to the Great Mysteries. . . . All

our life is nothing but a succession of errors, of painful wanderings away from the road, of long tramps on crooked paths without issues. At the moment we are to leave it, fears and terrors, shivering, deathly perspiration and a lethargic torpor assails us. But once we are out of it we pass into delicious meadows, where one breathes the purest air, where one hears melodies and sacred discourse, where one beholds heavenly visions. It is there that man, having become perfect by his new initiation, returned to freedom, really master of himself, celebrates, crowned with myrtles, the most august of all Mysteries, conversing with other souls just and pure. . . ."

THE USE OF A WORD.

The following article is the first of several which are intended to give an account of what some leading scientists think on subjects, on which our own studies have afforded us considerable information. The proposed series of articles is sure to be instructive, entertaining and suggestive. But they contain one debatable point which we think it better to mention beforehand.

This debatable point is the very word the author chose for the title and which necessarily will be used a good deal throughout the series. I mean the word "astral." But what is the "astral?"

What does this word imply? What is the function and the sphere of that part of man's inner nature, which this word designates? What limits its activity? How is it related to the rest of the principles which constitute either inanimate nature, or immortal man?

The reader will do well to answer all these questions to his own satisfaction to avoid future confusion in general and also because otherwise reading these articles will not give him the amount of pleasure and profit they are capable of giving.

First of all, let us turn to the early days of Theosophical study, the days when the great flood of new ideas, bursting on the student, necessitated the coining of new words. "Astral," on the lips of early Theosophists, was one of the words so coined. But in usage it soon became far too diffuse, far too vague.

By "astral" was meant the world of swaying, shifting, swarming images, which represent all the shapes of all that ever was or ever shall be, but have no sense, no volition of their own. The impalpable prototype of any physical body, man's physical body included, was also called the astral—still is—and no distinction was ever established between it, the lifeless and senseless *linga sharira* proper, and the *mayavi rupa,* the luminous, consciously evolved and consciously used immateral body of beings who are more than human. Yet *linga sharira* is in the body like the liquid permeating a sponge, and, though it can be seen, on occasions, aimlessly floating apart from the physical body itself, it can never go very far from it, being still governed by the physical limitations of space and time. And the *mayavi rupa* lives and acts in regions, where

these limitations do not exist, being endowed with the will and the consciousness of the great soul, whose visible part it is for the time being.

Also people would speak of an "astral" sense, without any certainty as to whether this adjective should be applied to the sense in question because of its own essential nature or merely because it is capable of perceiving the astral images.

But the greatest confusion existed and still exists in people's talk about the "astral body." The *linga sharira* is merely an image, that same image of men and things which we see disporting itself, when materialized on the kinetographic plates. It is senseless, it cannot will, it cannot act, it is entirely inert in itself. Yet people ascribe to its agency phenomena of second sight, of thought transference, even of prevision and prophecy.

Why is it so? Why should people, by no means deprived of insight and knowledge, make this mistake? Simply because of the unguarded habit of their tongues. In their vocabulary everything that is not palpable is "astral," and so the function and sphere of activity, entirely belonging to *manas* in its dual aspect, are carelessly ascribed to the *linga sharira*.

The confusion began as early as the appearance of the first edition of "*Light on the Path.*" For this indiscriminate use of the word "astral" was decidedly started at its appearance. Yet in justice and for the sake of true understanding we must remember that the author of "*Light on the Path*" says: "The whole world is animated and lit, down to its most material shapes, by a world within it. This inner world is called astral by some people, and it is as good a word as any other, though it merely means starry; but the stars, as Locke pointed out, are luminous bodies which give light of themselves. This quality is characteristic of the life which lies within matter; for those who see it, need no lamp to see it by. The word star, moreover, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon stir-an, to steer, to stir, to move, and undeniably it is the inner life which is master of the outer, just as a man's brain guides the movements of his lips. So that although astral is no very excellent word in itself, I am content to use it for my present purpose."

And so, in the opinion of the author of "*Light on the Path*," "astral is no very excellent word in itself," and this in the early

days, before diligent study, research and introspection have made us able to see complex things and from many sides.

As to the present day, it is my strong belief, that the time has come for us to be quite certain, in our own minds, as to the exact meaning of the word "astral," whenever we happen to use it. For with the advance of years, the word has decidedly degenerated and from "not very excellent in itself" it has become confusing. Let every reader or a group of readers make it quite clear for themselves what they mean by this word in all its gradations and purposes, and then the proposed series of articles will not fail to produce an excellent result. For in accordance with the law of moral demand and supply, their own clearness and precision are sure to react on the minds of the scientists, who so courageously and unswervingly pursue the task of bringing light where formerly there was nothing but darkness.

PHYSIOLOGISTS AND THE ASTRAL.

It is a reassuring symptom of the persisting, though probably unconscious, assimilation of occult teachings, that in very recent years—within the last decade, to be approximately exact—many most competent physiologists and other scientific investigators have devoted much time and labor to an examination of the evidence of the existence of the second principle of man, the *Linga Sharira,* or the Astral. It is needless to say these observers have not been studying the dual personality under this name—they have agreed to call it the subconscious or subliminal mind—but as discovered and described by them it corresponds exactly, as far as they have advanced, to the Eastern teaching on the subject. Although the modern conception is by no means commensurate with the ancient, many of the attributes and functions of the astral are to-day accepted by the foremost observers as facts beyond all doubt or question. Through experiments in hypnotism and kindred phenomena, they have become convinced of a consciousness which lies behind, or "under the threshold"—subliminal—of the ordinary intelligence; a consciousness that controls the automatic actions of the physical economy such as breathing and digestion, and also controls in many ways what may be called the physical intelligence. It is frequently found to be vastly superior to the brain mind, being cognizant of all kinds of information and knowledge wholly foreign and unrelated to the ordinary experience of the physical individuality. Some explorers, seeking to explain the phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., and yet avoiding the acceptance of a second and independent consciousness, have speculated upon the possibility of such explanation being found in the development of a sixth sense, potential in all, but manifesting only in some. This naturally is found to be adequately explanatory of a certain class of cases, but it fails to account for the projection of the self beyond the confines of the body, which is admittedly a fact in many well-known instances; and although belief in the growth of a sixth sense, a verification of the theosophical promise, is gaining quite a wide acceptance, it is not generally admitted that it can occupy the place or the functions of the subliminal self.

In confirmation of the foregoing some citations of the pub-

lished views of well-known physicians, physiologists and other students of man and nature may be found interesting and instructive, and encouraging withal to adherents of the ancient philosophy in finding the old teaching supported by the new. A most noteworthy presentation of the belief of the medical faculty in the Astral consciousness and its potent influence in disease is submitted in the annual address at a recent meeting of the Hampshire Branch of the Massachusetts Medical Society by its President, Dr. H. H. Seelye; as reported in the Medical Record (September, 1899) he said:

"For the purpose of explaining the possible mode of action of suggestion, hypnotism and allied phenomena, modern psychology has propounded the tentative working hypothesis of our possessing a sort of double personality, acting on and through the brain. These two personalities, living in harmony and usually working in unison, and acting and reacting on each other, may be designated as the conscious, and the subconscious or subliminal; or as the objective or physical, and the subjective or hidden and immaterial mind. The objective or conscious personality is the one we are so well acquainted with, and is, in our waking hours,acutely responsive to all outside influences, as well as to ideas mentally conceived, and receives impressions and transmits impulses in accordance with the conscious will of the individual. But the subjective personality and subconscious mind work unobtrusively and incessantly, through both our waking and sleeping hours, and are at all times in a state of receptivity to influence exerted through the senses from the world without, and presumably also to less material force and impulses originated in, or transmitted through, the physical brain cells and nervous ganglia. It is this form of mental activity that is manifested in dreams and in the vagaries of the somnambulist, that enables us to awake at a stipulated hour, and that recalls names and facts we vainly strive to remember, but that suddenly come to us later on when thinking about something else. It is this same power which, with no conscious thought or effect on our part, regulates the involuntary functions of breathing, heart-action, digestion, and the automatic activities of all the bodily organs. While responsive to stimuli from the conscious physical personality, it on the other hand often directs or modifies the ideas and actions

of the latter. It is as though there were two individuals of similar temperaments living as neighbors in the same house, at times working apart, and at others in harmony together. Each may do things and know of matters concealed from the other, but each may call upon the other for assistance when required. Each attends to its own affairs, but at times seems to delight in befooling or deceiving the other, or in acting eccentrically, to the surprise and wonder of its neighbor. While co-workers in the general management of the house, viz., the body, each works in its own way and as suits its own pleasure.

"It is by recognizing this hypothetical interrelation of two personalities in our individual that we can explain most of the phenomena induced by suggestion. An idea becomes implanted in the mind by either a known or an unknown process, and there it is taken up by the subconscious personality, and worked over and developed, till its effects appear in some easily recognized results, involving, it may be, some part of the body or its functions. Conviction or belief that a certain effect is to follow a given act is helpful and conducive to this unconscious transformation, but conscious belief is not always essential, provided that the subconscious ego is convinced, and so stimulated to activity. Thus many of the curative phenomena we so frequently observe, and which at times seem almost inexplicable, may be accounted for by alterations of nutrition produced by subconscious expectations aroused by suggestion. For instance, an ignorant child is told to work some ridiculous charm on a wart, and after a time, to his astonishment, he notices that it is gradually disappearing, though he has consciously given little or no attention to the matter since the first. But the subconscious personality, easily convinced of the efficacy of the act, has been steadily at work, concentrating energy and modifying nutrition in the diseased epithelial cells, till the cure is wrought.....The essential fact for success in suggestion seems to be either consciously or unconsciously, there must be in the mind of the individual a desire, a longing, a hope, a faith, or an expectation, that a certain condition will in time prevail. Surprising as it may seem, it is, however, the unconscious belief, usually, that works most powerfully, and often this is directly contrary to the conscious and expressed opinion of the subject. Granting this

theory of unconscious cerebration and expectant attention, due to suggestion, to be correct, we have now an adequate explanation of the many authentic cures of both functional and chronic organic disorders wrought by homœopathists, osteopathists, hydropathists, electropathists, masseurs, faith curers, Christian scientists, religious enthusiasts, blue glass cranks, and by all the other fads that from time to time rage and flourish successfully for a while only to give way at last to some other new and wonderful method of cure."

Dr. John D. Quackenbos, former professor in Columbia University, and at present practising his profession in New York City, submitted to an interview reported not long since in the New York *Sun*. Since his resignation from the faculty of Columbia he has devoted much of his time to the study of hypnotism, and has been much quoted and somewhat critisized by some of his medical confreres for his assertions that many hypnotic subjects recalled various and widely diverse selves when under the influence. In the interview above referred to Dr. Quackenbos spoke as follows:—"When psychology was a less advanced and definite science, and the theory of a duplex personality was less commonly accepted, reputable physicians had a feeling that hypnotism savored of charlatanism and was outside the legitimate province of medicine. Even to-day many physicians distrust the psychological science of mental suggestion and refuse to accept its theories and results, but the progression and liberal element in the profession is deeply interested in the experiments with hypnotism as a healing agent, and many of the most prominent physicians in the world are making frequent use of mental suggestion in the treatment of cases. Some of these doctors, yielding to a public prejudice which is merely the result of ignorance and is rapidly lessening as the principles of psychology become more widely known and understood, refrain from admitting their indebtedness to hypnotism and seem to be ashamed to be found making use of it, but others come out boldly announcing their belief in the power and virtue of the science.

"Constant experiments are being made by medical societies and by individuals, and the results of these experiments with the truths deducible from them are absolutely prodigious.....Leaving the moral possibilities of hypnotism out of the question and keeping strictly to therapeutics, experiment has proved and medical journals

have admitted that the subliminal or automatic mind, which lies back of the objective personality, can directly influence many of the vital processes, the circulation, the digestive functions, etc. That is, the automatic mind can control the outgo of force to the vital organs. In addition to this hypnotic suggestion can put the mind into a cheerful optimistic attitude toward the disease. The treatment is usually supplemented with auto-suggestion, which might be called self-hypnotism. An objective consciousness can suggest so forcibly to its own subjective consciousness that it will itself be swayed in turn by the subjective consciousness which it has impressed. Does that sound formidable? It is intelligible enough if you once admit the duplex personality, and one must soon admit that, if he studies psychology."

In Prof. Quackenbos' opinion the condition of profound sleep is the same as that of hypnotic trance—a conclusion reached by Bernheim half a century since—and the subliminal self freed from the trammels of the outer consciousness holds symposiums with the egos of the rest of humanity, and he hints with the spirits of those who have gone before—which is in clear accord with theosophic teaching save with regard to intercourse with deceased friends —but like the hypnotized subject, it brings back no memory to the physical self of its spiritual experience, though this soulful fellowship may be the fertile source of the divine intuitions and imaginings of seers and poets.

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